

“working closely,” “partnering with,” “providing clinical rotations” or “hiring as students.” One agency offered a “reality summer” for students. Personal recruitment approaches included attending career fairs, visiting colleges, holding recruitment lunches or dinners, and holding open house events for nursing students.

The third most frequently reported strategy referred to programs designed to transition the new RN graduate into the nursing workforce. By far, the majority of these programs were described as “internships” with the remainder consisting of structured orientations, which include the use of nurse preceptors.

Monetary incentives to attract new RN graduates account for the fourth and fifth strategies in Table 1. Based on information gathered by the NC Center for Nursing¹, the majority of scholarships offered by North Carolina hospitals are between \$1,500 and \$2,000 per year and typically require a one-year work commitment for each year funded. Hospitals also see competitive wages as an important incentive in attracting students to their agencies.

Additional strategies for recruiting newly licensed RNs were mentioned, but very rarely. Advertising, word of mouth, the use of hiring bonuses, offering flexible scheduling and a positive collegial environment were mentioned only 5% of the time or less. These may be effective strategies for some hospitals, but they were not widely reported.

Strategies included in the “Other” category were mentioned only once and included: assuring adequate staffing; offering flexible benefits; promoting unique patient populations; promoting specialty training; offering Internet-based BSN and MSN programs and using direct mail to reach prospective graduates. Three hospitals reported that they do not hire new graduates at all.

New RN Graduate Retention Strategies

On the question pertaining to strategies for retaining new RN graduates, 76 (61%) of NC hospitals provided a total of 99 strategies (Table 2). The top two strategies account for 69.7% of responses to this item and play an important role in enhancing social support and skill acquisition to the new RN graduate as they transition into the workplace. The use of internships, nurse preceptors and mentor programs were identified as the key to successful integration of new RN graduates. Also, a quality orientation described by respondents as “good”, “structured”, and even “intensive” was also identified as an effective tool in retaining new RN graduates.

Other strategies were also mentioned, but far less often. See Table 2 for specifics. The three strategies included in the “Other” category included: flexible benefits, a retention bonus and a sign-on contract.

¹ A summary of scholarship programs offered by NC hospitals and long term care facilities can be found on the NC Center for Nursing’s website by following this path: from the home page at www.nurseNC.org go to the Student Pages, to Financial Support, to the box labeled ‘North Carolina Employer-Sponsored Financial Support.’